REMARKS

Applicants reply to the Final Office Action dated April 1, 2010, within two months. Claims 30-53 are pending in the application and the Examiner rejects claims 30-53. Applicants cancel claims 32-33, 40-41, and 48-49, without prejudice to filing one or more claims having similar subject matter, in other applications. Support for the amendments may be found in the originally-filed specification. No new matter is entered with these amendments. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C § 103

The Examiner rejects claims 30-53 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rigole, U.S. Patent Application No. 2001/0049632 ("Rigole"), in view of Weiss et al., U.S. Patent No. 7,415,435 ("Weiss") and in further view of Erickson, U.S. Patent No. 6,014,644 ("Erickson"). Applicants respectfully disagree with these rejections, but Applicants present claim amendments in order to clarify the patentable aspects of the claims and to expedite prosecution.

Rigole generally teaches "an interchange party computer system (PCS) having means for presenting user interfaces to consumer computer systems and capturing data input through the user interfaces," (abstract). Rigole further discloses an "Interchange Party Computer System (IPCS)," (page 1, paragraph [0022]). This system provides a way for consumers to request service from various service providers, as discussed by Rigole at paragraphs [0022], [0057], [0063], [0073], and [0074]. The central component of this system is the IPCS, through which the consumers and service providers communicate. Consumers send user data to the IPCS; the consumer data can include an RFQ. Service providers send service provider data to the IPCS. This data can include information service programs offered by the provider. The IPCS receives these sets of data and uses them in its program module. The Examiner identifies the IPCS as an RFQ enrollment system and the service providers as RFQ provider systems.

The service providers, however, are not RFQ provider systems. While Rigole may teach that a consumer sends an RFQ to the IPCS, nowhere does Rigole disclose or contemplate a service provider sending its own RFQ (see [0043]). Because the service providers do not provide RFQs, they are not properly understood as being RFQ provider systems. Moreover, claim 30 of the present application additionally recites that RFQ provider systems request quotes from suppliers. Rigole is silent as to providers requesting quotes from suppliers. Therefore, Applicants submit that the service providers of

Rigole do not disclose or contemplate the claimed (plurality of) RFQ provider systems. The Examiner at page 3 of the Office action concedes that Rigole "fails to expressly teach the RFQ [provider systems] provide requests for quotes from a plurality of suppliers and sends quotes to a plurality of users."

Weiss is provided by the Examiner to provide elements not taught by Rigole. Weiss generally teaches "a quotation mechanism for service environments where the service level is negotiated," (abstract). Specifically, Weiss discloses "the operation of the invention in an environment with multiple clients and multiple service providers is better illustrated. Multiple clients, 102A, 102B and 102C are present. In addition, multiple service providers 104A, 104B and 104C are also present. Each service provider 104A, 104B and 104C provides one or more services at multiple service levels. Each service provider can provide services to one or more clients," (col. 8, lines 25-32, and FIG. 3). However, Weiss appears to merely be disclosing a plurality of service providers supplying a plurality of services to a plurality of users in contrast to "receiving, quote provider data from each of the RFQ provider systems in the computer based RFQ enrollment system, wherein the quote provider data includes information related to quotes that can be provided by each RFQ provider system in the computer based RFQ enrollment system, and wherein each RFQ provider system requests quotes from suppliers and sends quotes to a user," as recited by independent claim 30 (emphasis added) and as similarly recited by independent claims 38 and 46. Stated another way, the present application recites a RFQ enrollment system which is configured to house various RFQs from RFQ provider systems. The RFQ provider systems in turn receive RFQs from suppliers. The RFQs detail the services/supplies that are being quoted by the suppliers. Weiss is silent to at least an RFQ enrollment system which receives RFQs from RFQ provider systems, (see Weiss FIGS. 2 and 3).

Erickson generally teaches "a system and method for facilitating communication between a plurality of buyers and a plurality of suppliers," (abstract). However, Erickson is silent to "receiving, quote provider data from each of the RFQ provider systems in the computer based RFQ enrollment system, wherein the quote provider data includes information related to quotes that can be provided by each RFQ provider system in the computer based RFQ enrollment system, and wherein each RFQ provider system requests quotes from suppliers and sends quotes to a user," as recited by independent claim 30 (emphasis added) and as similarly recited by independent claims 38 and 46.

Thus, the cited references either alone or in combination fail to disclose or contemplate "receiving, quote provider data from each of the RFQ provider systems in the computer based RFQ

enrollment system, wherein the quote provider data includes information related to quotes that can be provided by each RFQ provider system in the computer based RFQ enrollment system, and wherein each RFQ provider system requests quotes from suppliers and sends quotes to a user," as recited by independent claim 30 (emphasis added) and as similarly recited by independent claims 38 and 46. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 30, 38 and 46.

Dependent claims 31, 34-37, 39, 42-45, 47, and 50-53, variously depend from independent claims 30, 38 and 46. Therefore, Applicants assert that dependent claims 31, 34-37, 39, 42-45, 47, and 50-53 are patentable for at least the same reasons stated above for differentiating independent claims 30, 38 and 46, as well as in view of their own respective features. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of dependent claims 31, 34-37, 39, 42-45, 47, and 50-53.

When a phrase similar to "at least one of A, B, or C" or "at least one of A, B, and C" is used in the claims or specification, Applicants intend the phrase to mean any of the following: (1) at least one of A; (2) at least one of B; (3) at least one of C; (4) at least one of A and at least one of B; (5) at least one of B and at least one of C; (6) at least one of A and at least one of C; or (7) at least one of A, at least one of B, and at least one of C.

Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. **19-2814**. Applicants invite the Examiner to telephone the undersigned, if the Examiner has any questions regarding this Reply or the present application in general.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: June 1, 2010   By: _____ # 64680
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